

A REAPPRAISAL OF PĀṆINI

Pāṇini, as a grammarian, has been highly acclaimed by the ancients as well as by the moderns, by the East as well as by the West. But his grammar is deficient in many respects. What the great grammarian lacked most is the historical insight. It will be corroborated by the following discussions.

Let us first discuss verbal roots. Pāṇini has framed a number of rules according to which some roots are substituted by other roots in some tenses or moods. Some of these rules are:

1. *Luṅsanor ghasṭ* (2.4.37).
2. *Hano vadha liṇi* (2.4.42).
3. *Iṇogā luṇi* (2.4.45).
4. *Asterbhūḥ* (2.4.52).
5. *Bruvo vaciḥ* (2.4.53).
6. *Cakṣiṇaḥ khyāñ* (2.4.54).

The fact is that conjugational formations of every root in every tense or mood are not found in literature. If the root *i* = to go has no aorist formations we should treat it as such and should not complement it by the same of « *gā* » which is phonetically different from « *i* ». Hence formations like « *eti* » > *i*, and « *agāt* » > *gā* should not be treated as complementary to one another. They are different formations of the different roots although both of them have the same meaning. Pāṇini, here, failed to analyze the developing process of the language. If a rule like, « *Iṇogā luṇi* » could be framed « *Iṇo gam luṇi* » could as well be framed.

In the Vedic language there are roots which are not confined to a single class. Such roots have different conjugational formations according to different classes. The root « *trā* » = « to rescue » belongs to the

second as well as to the fourth class; so it has, in Ipv.2.pl.both « *trādhvam* » and « *trāyadhvam* »; Pāṇini has explained it and formations like it, by his magic formula « *bahulaṃ chandasi* » (2.4.76).

Phonetic elements which are known as bases or roots are not necessarily verbal only. They are verbal as well as nominal as attested by the *Ṛgveda* in a large number of cases, e.g. *ud* = to wet and *ud* (f.) = water (*Ṛv.* 5.31.4); *tan* = to stretch and *tan* (f.) offspring (*Ṛv.* 5.49.13); and *yudh* = to fight and *yudh* (f.) = battle (*Ṛv.* 1.8.3) etc. Now the formation of noun « *yut* » according to the system of Pāṇini is a feat of grammatical jugglery. First the suffix « *kvip* » is added to the root « *yudh* » and then the same is dropped leaving no trace of its own.

According to Pāṇini, there is only one pp.suffix-« *ta* » which changes according to his will, sometimes into « *na* » as in « *bhugna* » and then into « *ka* » as in « *śuṣka* », into « *va* » as in « *pakva* » and into « *ma* » as in « *kṣāma* ». The fact is that all of them are different suffixes, otherwise it will be difficult to explain two different formations like « *bhukta* » and « *bhugna* ».

Pāṇini has treated the whole lot of comparative and superlative formations under the head of secondary derivations. He derives « *śreṣṭha* » and « *jyeṣṭha* » from the single word « *praśasya* » by his two rules

1. *praśasyasya śraḥ* (5.3.60) and
2. *Jya ca* (5.3.61).

How could « *praśasya* » be turned once into « *śra* » and at the next time in to « *jya* » is beyond the reach of logical comprehensions. The fact is that « *śreṣṭha* » is an irregular formation from the root « *śri* » = to spread light and « *jyeṣṭha* » is regularly formed from the root « *jyā* » = to overpower. This « *jyeṣṭha* » is initially accented. But there is one more oxytonic « *jyeṣṭha* » for which Pāṇini has framed a special rule, « *vr̥ddhasya ca* » (5.3.62). The primary meaning of « *jyeṣṭha* » is greatest and the secondary meaning is eldest. Difference in accent is due to the difference in meaning. « *Kaniṣṭha* » can be cited as parallel example which when initially accented means smallest and when oxytonic, means « youngest ».

One word may have many meanings. To explain it Pāṇini assumes as many suffixes for it. « *somya* » is an adjective and its derivation is *soma*- + *ya* (« *ya* » being a secondary suffix which forms adjectives of relations). Thus the derivational meaning of « *somya* » is, « related to *soma* ». This meaning changes according to the noun it qualifies. When it qualifies a person it means « *soma*-loving » as in *Ṛv.* 10.14.6. When it qualifies « *madhu* » etc. it means full of *soma* as in *Ṛv.* 4.34.4. We do

not require the following two rules of Pāṇini to explain this difference in meanings:

1. *Somamarhati yaḥ* (4.4.137).
2. *Maye ca* (4.4.138).

«*Saumya*» is also a *vṛddhied* form of the same. So the rule «*So-mātṭyaṇ*» (4.2.30) also appears to be superfluous as there is no change in meaning between *somya* and *saumya*. Similar is the case of «*dā-dhika*» = made of or mixed with curd. For this Pāṇini has framed three rules. They are:

1. *Dadhnaṣṭhak* (4.2.18).
2. *Samśkṛtam* (4.4.3).
3. *Samśṛṣṭe* (4.4.22).

Here the last two rules are superfluous. Instances can be multiplied. It is interesting to note there that there are cases where Pāṇini has prescribed only one suffix having different semantic nuances, e.g. «*straiṇa* and *paum̐sna*» under the rule, «*strīpum̐sābhyāṇ naṁsnaṇau bhavanāt*» (4.1.87). Changes in meanings of a word depend upon the usage and not on suffixal changes.

The same device of adding and dropping the suffix has been applied to a number of secondary derivatives, e.g. *tadrāja* suffixes as in «*pañ-cālāḥ*» (pl. of *pañcāla*) denoting the Pañcāla people (under the rule 2.4.62); suffixes denoting time related to a *nakṣatra* = lunar mansion as in *puṣya* (under the rule (4.2.4) and suffixes denoting fruits as in *bada-ram* = fruits of the jujube tree (under the rule (4.3.163). In such cases it is the usage which has played a decisive role.

A number of superfluous formations also occur in secondary derivations. One interesting example is the rule, «*astināstidistaṇ matih*» (4.4.60). Here the question is why the word «*nāstika*» is included in the rule. Once «*āstika*» is derived, «*nāstika*» can very well be formed by means of negative compound like «*naika*» etc. Logically also the proposition «*asti*» should precede that of *nāsti*.

A number of rules relating to *Bahubrīhi* compound appear to be superfluous or uncalled for. The rule «*jāyāyā niḥ*» (5.4.134) says that «*jāyā*» at the end of a *Bah.* substitutes («*ni*» for its final *ā*). Thus «*yuvajānīḥ*» etc. are formed. But «*jani*» in the *Ṛv.* means wife, so «*yuvati*» may very well be compounded with «*jani*». The rule, «*Dharmādanīc kevalāt*» (5.2.124) says that *dharma*, when preceded by a single member in a *Bah.*, becomes «*dharman*». Thus «*samānadharmā*» etc. are formed. But in the *Ṛv.* «*dharman*» itself is an independent word and *samānadharmā* etc. can be compounded with it. Similarly «*dha-*

*nus* » and *dhanvan* having the same sense of bow occur in the *Ṛv.* so words like « *śārṅgadhanvā* » etc. may be compounded with *dhanvan* instead of with *dhanus*. Thus the rule « *Dhanuṣaśca* » (5.4.132) becomes infructuous.

A large number of words of negative compound are enumerated in the rule (6.3.75). Many of them appear to be of dubious character. *Nakṣatra* = lunar mansion, is one of them. It is now derived from the root *nakṣ* = to attain. *Nakha* = nail is an IE. word and has cognates in many branches. *Nakra* = an alligator is most probably a Dravidian word.

From what has been said above it may be concluded that Pāṇini did not pay proper attention to the process of historical development of Sanskrit language.



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